♦ The Government has been assisting CHEMEXCIL, an autonomous Export Promotion Council, setup by the Department of Commerce, through its Marketing Development Assistance (MDA) Scheme by financing the participation of exporters (including the exporters of herbal products) in overseas fairs, exhibitions, for mounting trade delegations and through its Market Access Initiatives Scheme by financing conduct of market study and follow-up activities in foreign countries. In order to give thrust to exports of Ayurvedic and Herbal products a new panel has also been constituted in Chemexcil.

Free trade with MGC group of countries

1503. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made with regard to the proposed free trade with various east countries like Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh etc.;

(b) the details of the outcome during MGC's ministerial meeting held at Phnom Penh on the 20th June, 2003;

(c) whether any decision has been taken to establish rail link from New Delhi to Hanoi connecting countries of the Meking-Ganga Co-operation group; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) Discussions are on for free trade arrangements with ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), Bangladesh, Singapore and Thailand. However, Free Trade Agreement with any of these countries is yet to be finalized.

(b) At the third MGC Ministerial meeting held at Phnom Penh on 20th June, 2003, the MGC countries made a collective resolution to expedite the implementation of agreed projects and to explore a number of new and innovative ideas for cooperation which have

been included in the "Phnom Penh Roadmap' adopted upon the conclusion of the Ministerial meeting. India announced a contribution of US $ 100,000/- to kick off the MGC cooperation fund, which will be used for financing agreed projects.

(c) and (d) In the third MGC Ministerial Meeting, it was decided to conduct a feasibility study of a rail link between New Delhi and Hanoi for strengthening the physical connectivity for MGC countries. The MGC countries accepted the offer made by India to depute a technical team for conducting a feasibility study.

Business with China

1504. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI KULDIP NAYYAR:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is bright scope for business with China as said by Cll;

(b) whether his Ministry has assessed the scope for entering into trade and business relations with China;

(c) in view of the huge potential of the Indian Companies, whether any road map has been drawn up; and

(d) if so, the sectors identified for the purpose and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (d) There is scope for expansion of trade and economic cooperation between India and China. Sectors of export interest include ores, cotton yarn fabrics, plastics, organic chemicals, stones, precious stones, fish and seafood, fruits and vegetables, iron and steel, hides and skins, inorganic chemicals, etc. Besides, India and China have agreed to set up a Joint Study Group of experts to examine potential complementarities and draw up a programme for developing India-China trade and economic cooperation for the next five years.